

**Attendance:** Matt Downs, Lee Kaufman, LeeAnn Kruszynski, Nicole Molinaro, Evie Slavic, Diane Scott, Liz W-Chase

**Recorder:** Liz W-Chase

**Absent:** Jasmine Pope

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 pm

**Guest Presentations:**

**Kristen Jacobson, Assistant Director/Youth Services Manager, Westchester Public Library re: America in Bloom Community Profile of Westchester**

Kristen shared that the library has been very proactive with making environmentally friendly changes to their facility and grounds. These changes include installation of a new HVAC system, reflective roof, energy efficient T9 fluorescent lighting, semi-pervious pavers, pollinator garden, native garden beds and a rain barrel. They are also pursuing electric vehicle charging stations and solar panels in consultation with the University of Illinois and are lobbying for state funding.

The library is planning to convert a native garden bed to prairie and to install a monarch butterfly garden. Kristen is completing information for the America in Bloom grant of \$25K to fund these projects. There is some general information about the Village that she needs for the application. The Village provides some of the routine maintenance of the Library grounds and there may be a need for collaboration on the maintenance of public common grounds.

**Nikki Way, Director of Development and Communications, Independent Contractor re: Proposal for Grant Writing Services for Village of Westchester**

Nikki presented a proposal for her to provide grant writing services to the Village as an independent contractor. She discussed the possibility and benefits of forming a 501C3 to obtain access to privately funded, high dollar grant funds as well as the prospect of providing of hourly or per project services. She stated that the baseline data from the Greenest Region Compact would make us more grant ready.

**Commission Priority**

**Municipal Scoring of the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus (MMC) Greenest Region Compact (GRC) Framework**

All commissioners in attendance stated that it is essential that we gain an understanding of the village's accomplishments, goals and opportunities by obtaining scoring of the 10 sections of the Chicago Metropolitan Mayors Caucus Greenest Region Compact (MMC-GRC). The MMC-GRC Framework is a tool that presents consensus goals for environmental sustainability to be addressed by local municipalities, yet will have coordinated, positive impacts on a much larger scale. The Village formally endorsed the MMC-GRC on 4/26/16 and the Framework provides suggested objectives, strategies, and tools to help us achieve consensus goals of the GRC. It was suggested that the village provide scoring of one section of the Framework per month to GROW.

**Individual Commissioner Priorities**

Matt Downs – Flooding is a huge issue and should be a high priority for the commission. Trees are being cut down and there is a need to increase replacement sensibly. Grow the green space along the creek and beautify it to increase the utilization of the space. Focus on composting and recycling. Become a model for ecological practice.

Lee Kaufman – Become a more eco-friendly and sustainable community. Encourage purchasing of electric vehicles instead of those with internal combustion engines. Public transportation is under-utilized. Provide awareness of alternative modes of transportation.

LeeAnn Krusynski – A partnership with Public Works for sustainable change. Waste/Recycling. Urban Forestry. Flood Mitigation.

Nicole Molinaro – Citizen Science. Environmental justice and equity. Obtain the Village’s most recent Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Community Rating System (CRS) scoring that served for the scoring within our village (applies to resident flood insurance cost). Participation in Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD) community event on 4/23/22 with compost and raffles. Soil health. Enroll in Bee City USA to support pollinators.

Diane Scott – Get people into green spaces, focusing on children at the Wolf Road Prairie and engaging with the Save the Prairie Society. Activities in the Village: Tree Identification, Scavenger Hunt. Build community awareness of how government effects policies, engage public for input.

Liz W-Chase – Work towards greater adoption of clean energy throughout the Village. Continued utilization of fossil fuels is not sustainable. Utilization of energy derived from fossil fuels negatively impacts the quality of air that we breathe and worsens climate change.

**Budget Items Requested for Operation of GROW**

- #1 – Obtain scoring of Metropolitan Mayors Caucus –Greenest Region Compact (MMC-GRC) from the Village
- #2 – 1 hour per month with Scott Russell or designee
- #3 – Materials needed to set up a booth for GROW for community outreach at local events.
- #4 – T-shirts for commission members to wear at community outreach events.

**Items to be referred to Village for Consideration**

- #1 - Installation of bike racks at municipal facilities that do not already have them.
- #2 – Consideration for assistance with Westchester Library’s America in Bloom grant request
- #3 – Consideration of proposal by Nikki Way for provision of grant writing services.

**Open Discussion**

### **Tree Care**

There was a discussion about tree replacement and the village's ordinance. There were questions about who is watering the new residential parkway trees. It was mentioned that Scott Russell, Director of Public Works (DPW) was hoping to reach out to someone with Morton Arboretum about trees. Commissioner LeeAnn Krusynski leads the Chicago Region Tree Initiative at Morton Arboretum and it was mentioned that they should have a conversation about tree replacement in our village. She has pamphlets that provide information on how homeowners should care for their newly planted tree.

### **Facebook Page**

There was a discussion about creating a Facebook page for the commission.

### **Action Items**

Diane will submit an article on the Village's upcoming Shredding Event on 4/23, highlighting use of the i-Naturalist App, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District distribution of tree saplings and compost for the April paper by 3/15/22

LeeAnn will submit an article on tree care for the May paper by 4/15/22

LeeAnn will explore whether the Arboretum may be able to provide trees to replenish Westchester's tree canopy and will discuss at the April meeting.

LeeAnn and Matt will collaborate on setting up a Facebook page for GROW.

Matt will open the April meeting with the Inspiration.

Matt shared that the Citizens for Conservation (part of Barrington Garden Club) is providing native plants for those interested in exchange for the seeds that are produced. He will discuss at the April meeting.

### **Adjourn**

At 7:57 pm Lee motioned to adjourn the meeting, motion was seconded by Matt. The motion was carried unanimously.